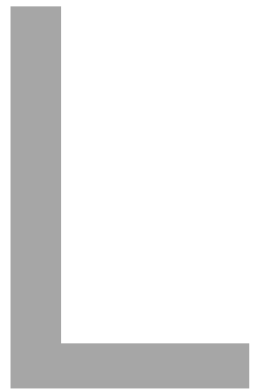




# QUANTA MAGAZINE

**Volume 28 - Issue 6**  
**Oct/Nov 2011**



## Information on the Association

**Membership of QUANTA, the independent QL user group, is by annual subscription. The Membership Secretary can supply full details. Copies of the association's constitution & annual accounts are available from the Secretary. There is an extensive software library. There are active national subgroups. Details are given in the Member's Guide and in this magazine.**

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**COPY DATE for DECEMBER/JANUARY 2012 ISSUE is:**

**6th January 2012**

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**T**he number of different nationalities that subscribe to QUANTA amazes me, currently we have nineteen, so in the best festive way to all out members, compliments of the season.



QUANTA can only continue with its members (and others) help, we need your input however small to contribute, whether a program listing showing your work, an experience with some related hardware or a review of a game or application you feel would benefit members. So if you have something you think is of interest then please let us know, as ever the usual email or snail mail to the [editor@quanta.org.uk](mailto:editor@quanta.org.uk)

If you have QL-related news that you'd like us to include on this page, please get in touch with News Editor - Dilwyn Jones at [news@quanta.org.uk](mailto:news@quanta.org.uk)

### QPC on DOS

Malcolm Lear has sent me a copy of software he has written which allows QPC2 to be used from a DOS drive device for those who would rather not use the QXL.WIN filing system. This software adds QL executable file headers to QL jobs stored on DOS/Windows drives and patches the various SBASIC procedures and functions including EXEC, EXEC\_W, EX, EW, EXEP, EX\_M, ET, HOT\_LOAD, HOT\_CHP, HOT\_CHP1, HOT\_RES, and HOT\_RES1 to start QL programs from the Windows directory. Important: please make sure you read the instruction file INSTALLATION.TXT first to make sure you know fully what the software does, how to set it up and so on.

Download QPConDOS from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/files/index.html>

### Turbo Toolkit News

George Gwilt writes:

Version 3.40 of Turbo Tk Code is on my site <http://gwiltprogs.info/>

Version 3.39 (announced in the last issue of Quanta) allowed COMMAND\_LINE to select a daughter SBASIC's channel 0 by giving as a parameter the ID of any channel opened to that SBASIC. The opened channel did not need to be a CON device.

Version 3.40 additionally allows the parameter to be the Job ID of the target SBASIC. COMMAND\_LINE looks first to see if the parameter is a Job ID.

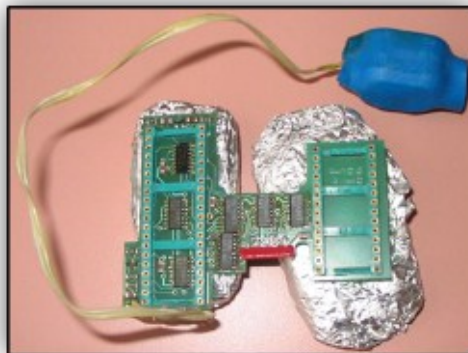
# QUANTA Magazine

## QIMI Manual

I have also added copies of manuals for the QIMI mouse interface. I have provided copies of both the earlier QIMI manual as sold by QJump and the slightly updated later version from Quanta. These are available as either Word .doc files or PDF files.

These are in addition to the existing circuit diagram and register programming information, originally supplied by Dave Westbury.

Download all these from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/index.html> and scroll down to the second half of the page, or go direct using <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/index.html#qimi>



*QIMI mouse interface*

**Paragraph Now Freeware**

## QUANTA Magazine

The ProWesS-based pointer driven word processor Paragraph has now been released as Freeware by the author Francois Lançault and added to the ProWesS page on my website. The version available to download is version 2.03. Paragraph was originally available in two versions, the original version 1 was available free and the enhanced version 2 was formerly available as commercial software – both versions are available from my website. Note that in order to use Paragraph you need to have both the pointer environment and ProWesS system on your computer. ProWesS is the PROGS Windowing System (hence the part capitalisation of the name ProWesS), originally developed by Joachim van der Auwera from the company PROGS in Belgium – ProWesS is also free to download from the same page these days.

Download Paragraph and ProWesS from <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/prowess/index.html>

### **JOB2BAS**

Job2Bas allows executable QL programs to be transferred through other operating systems without loss of executable file headers, e.g. for transferring programs to emulators. via Windows. It works by converting the QL executable to a S\*BASIC program as a QL BASIC program full of DATA statements, together with a few lines of QL BASIC to convert the DATA back to a QL executable job.

S\*BASIC programs are not affected by the loss of file headers, so this allows you to work around the loss of headers problem. This also gets around the problem of how to transfer a first copy of Unzip to an emulator.

## QUANTA Magazine

The usual way to avoid loss of QL executable file headers when transferring files via Windows or other operating systems is to zip up the file and then unzip them on the target emulator. But this raises the catch 22 situation of how do you unzip a zipped copy of unzip without an existing copy of QL unzip to unzip the zipped copy of unzip? There is of course Jonathan Hudson's Self-extract version of unzip, but some users have reported problems with getting this to work on modern systems, especially systems with level 2 filing systems. So I came up with the idea of the Job2Bas program which can be used to disguise a copy of Unzip as a BASIC program which can be simply just run on the target system to create a copy of Unzip. Using that you can then unzip a full version of Unzip, which you can get from Jonathan Hudson's Dead Letter Drop website at [www.daria.co.uk/gdos](http://www.daria.co.uk/gdos)

You can download Job2Bas and also encoded versions of Unzip versions 5.32 and 5.41 from the Archivers page on my website, at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/arch/index.html>

### Q-BUS LATEST

Further to our item about the Q-Bus prototype in the last issue, Adrian Ives of Memory Lane Computing has written that:

Current information about the project can now be found here:

<http://www.memorylanecomputing.com/qbus.htm>

Also, some preliminary documentation is available here:





## Memory Lane Computing Blog

Adrian Ives has also let me know that Memory Lane Computing now has a blog, where you can read up to date details about Adrian's latest efforts with his QL projects.

The URL is: <http://www.memorylanecomputing.com/blog/>

# Q U A N T A

## Independent QL Users Group

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## **Next QUANTA Sponsored Event**

Annual General Meeting 2012 And Workshop, Date: Sat/Sun 24th/25th March

Opening on Saturday at 11.00 am (Doors open 10 am for setting up),

Sunday at 10.00 am with the AGM at 2.00 pm in the afternoon.

The Venue will be in Manchester at the

3rd Davyhulme Scout Headquarters, "The Endeavour",

Conway Road, off Lostock Road, Davyhulme,

Manchester. M41 0TF. Near M60 J9.



### Countdown to End Game

Posted on November 18, 2011 by Admin

## QDOS Internals

Norman Dunbar writes:

“Both George Gwilt and myself - but mostly George - have been updating <http://qdosmsg.dunbar-it.co.uk> with lots of information on the internals of QDOS and more especially, the Pointer Environment.

Huge thanks are due to George who seems to have unlimited time for adding information to "my" web site.”

## JUST WORDS! MAPPING PROGRESS

Just Words! reports that its mapping project is proceeding smoothly. All the present map databases have been converted to QL x,y coordinates to enable QL-ers to use them in their own programs. Just Words! intends to set up a second maps page for QL use consisting of the converted databases and a maps toolkit. This will include a detailed manual and several short SuperBASIC programs:

- A simple map display program giving scaling advice

- A program to reduce the size of the databases

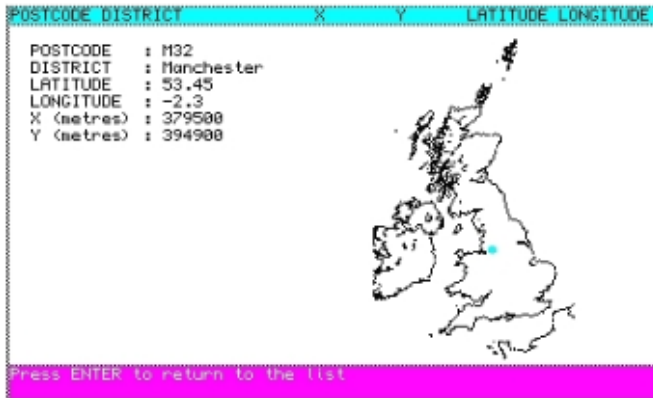
## QUANTA Magazine

A program to extract the data coordinates for a small area from a larger database

A program to convert databases into SuperBASIC data lines

Just Words has tested the feasibility of the project by updating the postcodes program on its website using the UK maps database. This involved reducing the size of the database to one twentieth of its former size and then converting it in data lines. The quality that can be achieved can be seen from the illustration.

Just Words! hopes to post the new version of the postcodes program on its website in the near future. At the moment there is no firm date for launching the QL maps page, but Just Words! hopes that it will be early in the new year. <http://www.gwicks.net/justwords.htm>



## Swiss QL Meeting

Urs König writes:

“It all started earlier this month with an invitation for coffee and cake in my offices.

## QUANTA Magazine

Yesterday afternoon [October 29th] some of the Swiss QL fellows met. There was even a South German QLer who joined the party. It was not only about coffee and cake (even we enjoyed that). We found the time to do some QL tinkering.

Here's the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/QLvsJaguar>

The pictures are in the Shows/2011 Lake Valley CH folder of my Sinclair QL Picture Gallery”

<http://cid-c250d8748980ce5a.photos.live.com/albums.aspx>

### **QaLendar 2012**

My annual offering of the QaLendar (QL themed calendar) is now available to download from my website. Filled with QL themed pictures, it is available in two forms

PDF file of the complete calendar with pictures. This is about 380KB to download.

The skeleton of the QaLendar as a 12 page Word .doc file, with just the one month per page and a placeholder table at the bottom of each page in which you can add your own photos to customise it.

I chose not to add the Word .docx version of the QaLendar to the website as it is almost 10 MB in size and would take forever to upload and download.

Access it from the QaLendar page on my website at

<http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/gen/calendar/calendar.html>



*The QaLendar 2012*

## **Unzip Self-Extracting Disk Image**

After I moaned a bit about the seemingly never ending problems some users seem to have with using the Self-Extract version of the Unzip program, Rob Heaton (Site Administrator of the QL Forum) has approached the problem from a different angle.

He has made a self-extracting QL disk image of QL Unzip which can be downloaded via QL Forum at <http://www.qlforum.co.uk/downloads/unzip.exe> (DD disk version) and at <http://www.qlforum.co.uk/downloads/unziphd.exe> (HD disk version) and used on Windows PCs.

Save a copy of this somewhere (e.g. on your Windows Desktop) and then run the appropriate version with a DD or HD floppy disk in the drive. It will then “create” a QL format floppy disk with a copy of QL

## **QUANTA Magazine**

Unzip on it which can then be used on most QL disk systems or emulators to provide that vital first copy of Unzip. Rob has even secured Jonathan Hudson's blessing for this!

Please remember that if using Windows 7, it has no support for handling or formatting DD disks, so you have to use the HD disk version of the disk image. It does work with an external USB floppy drive too.

### **Talent**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, Rich Mellor wrote of the latest step in his efforts to get as many early QL software re-released and preserved. "I have today received a load of master cartridges for the Talent + software (from Tom Dolezal, the owner of Talent+ ) - now to find some time to go through these and see if any are usable.

Hopefully this means I will be able to re-release some more of their former titles.

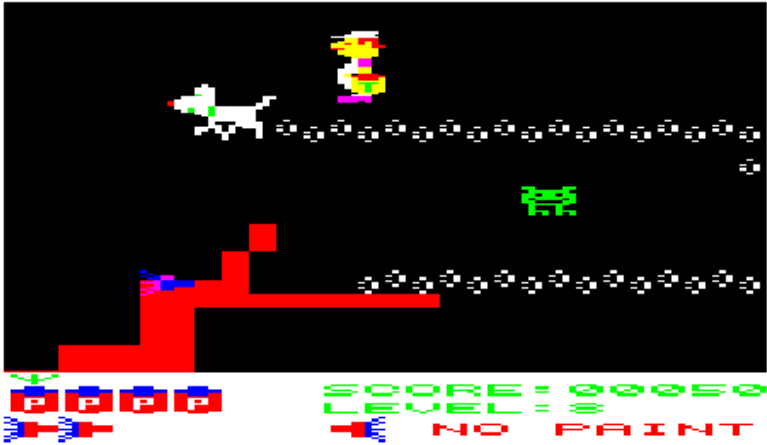
It will also be interesting to see if any have the code for generating the copy protection and the non-protected original programs / sources!

Only about 100 cartridges to work through..."

Read about his efforts on the QL Forum at:

<http://qlforum.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=255&p=1528#p1528>

The following day he wrote that he had managed to get the Crazy Painter game up and running.



*Screenshot of Crazy Painter for the Sinclair QL*

“I have removed the copy protection (quite easy for this one!) and so will be able to re-release the game.

An odd little game this, but quite compelling - you have to move your paint brush around the screen, to cover it all with paint before you use up all of the paint!

Trouble is that there are all sorts of people, dogs and creatures that get in the way, leaving mucky prints across your paint work. If you touch them, then it will stop them dead in their tracks, but some will take your paint, others will take your paint brush !!

There are 8 levels of play and even a challenge stage, where you have to stop the paint dripping down to the bottom of the screen by using your scraper.”



# QUANTA Magazine

## QL Forum Is 1!

Well, QL Forum is now one year old as of November 2011. We have an interview with the founders Rob Heaton and Peter Scott in this issue, and to celebrate the event, Mrs Heaton presented Rob with this lovely QL Cake.



*Mrs Heaton's QL Forum cake*



*QL Forum with birthday cake logo!*

## QUANTA Magazine

Malcolm Lear has released version 7.21 of the PCB Design package. He reports that there are “quite a few changes, mostly due to personal requirements. They include the ability to panellise for production and a new ultra high resolution mode for some new BGA devices.”

He also reports that he now has a university spin-off company and all the boards were designed on QPC! See their website at <http://www.fortito.com/>

PCB Design can be downloaded from my website at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/graphics/index.html> (scroll down to the link to the Lear PCB Design package).

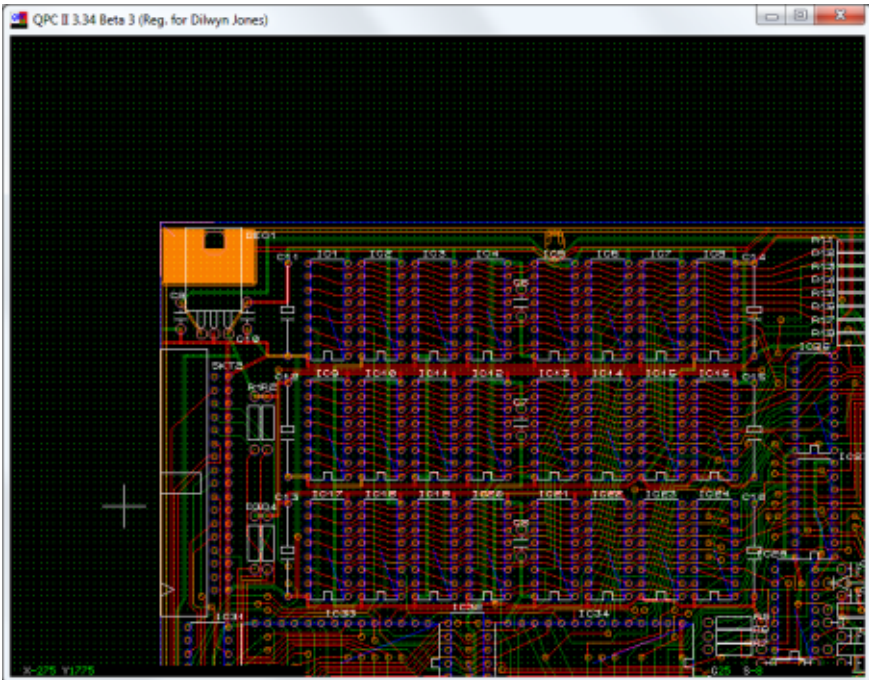


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Here's a list of changes to the most recent versions of the program.

V7.20 Added bridging component for panellising boards.

7.21 Deprecated separate layer mode now removed. This resulted in a



large code clean-up and the addition of top/bottom edge routing masks.

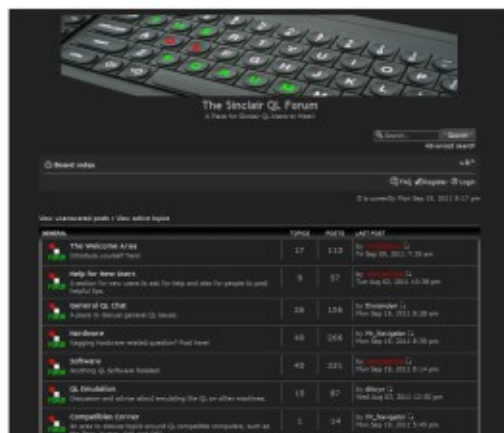
The changes also allow the possibility of adding two more masks in the future. Component reference offset now moved from file header to individual components.

This allows for production panelisation. New 'Ultra High Density' mode optimises track, pad and via sizes to allow 4mil track/space design work.

<http://qlforum.co.uk>



A Place for Sinclair QL Users to Meet!



THE QL FORUM is an informal online community for talking about all things QL.

Join in and get involved!

<http://qlforum.co.uk>

**W**ith the latest re-releases from RWAY Software, it's a great time to be a QL gamer, with a chance to play new games for the first time or revisit some classic titles.

Alien Hijack is a traditional room-based adventure using 2d sprites and tiles to create a 3d isometric effect in the same style as Speccy games such as Alien 8 and Movie. Originally by Chi-Soft of New Zealand in



1987, The story is set in 2003 - sadly we never did get those silver foil suits or hovercraft - and sees our hero trying to regain control of a ship that has been hijacked by aliens whilst travelling through the Bermuda Triangle.

The graphics are the real star of Alien Hijack, with some of the best visuals I've seen so far on a QL. Before I had the chance to buy the re-release, the screenshots have always stood out in old QL magazine adverts.

The graphics themselves are bold and colourful with some lovely details, such as lamp fittings on the walls and plenty of furniture. When travelling between areas, the rooms appear quickly although I have had the odd problem in telling the depth of items in a room, if it's in front of a desk or on top of. In true isometric game style, the rooms are inhabited by all

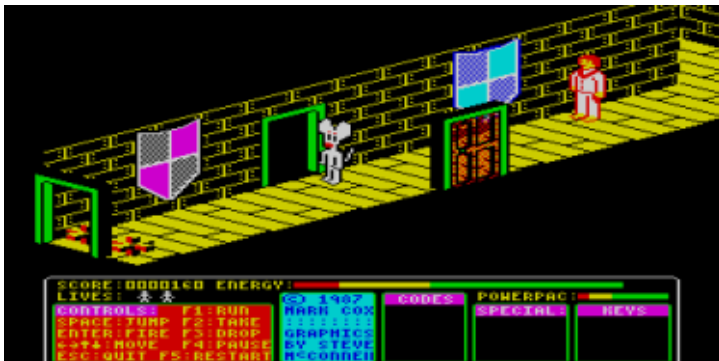
## QUANTA Magazine

kinds of weird and wonderful creatures, including a stealth alien hat stand which leaps out and gallops after you.

The controls can be a little tricky, taking a bit of practice. Space is jump, whilst Enter fires your laser pistol. Movement is handled 4-way; North, South, East and West. There are no diagonals or a rotation option.

Gameplay-wise, Alien Hijack is tricky, with an old skool unforgiving toughness to it. Monsters will make a beeline straight for you, killing with one touch. There are various objects to collect, with the goal of finding special codes to secure the bridge. Although personally, I think the main enjoyment of this kind of game is discovering new rooms (all 192, some of which are secret) and seeing what crazy things will be bouncing about, ready to pounce on you.

The sound is like most QL games - pretty sparse. However, the game supports the QTALK module, so those lucky enough to have this will have a unique experience.



Alien Hijack is an enjoyable, if not tough game, but it's also a great game to show off to friends, showcasing just what the QL can do.

In one of his Helpline articles, Dilwyn suggested that I convert my Tally integer sort to work with text. At first this seemed impossible to me, but after several weeks of thought it occurred to me that there just might be a method of doing this.

Tally sorting keeps a list of tallies of alphanumeric words as they are fed in to Ram. (In this demonstration program they are generated randomly). Then, by working up through the list, any cell containing a tally produces a word which is therefor intrinsically sorted, each word occurring as many times as the tally amounts to.

Please refer to the last Quanta magazine to see how integers can be sorted at great speed. (Integer sorting is simpler to understand).

To sort text, words have to be converted into numbers, and it dawned on me that Hexadecimal numbers contain letters A to F in base 16 arithmetic, so letters A to Z could be converted to decimal address numbers using base 36.

Of course, with integers, the numbers are in base 10 which means the list needs no special treatment, whereas with base 36, you need base conversion routines and a modified method to address the word list using cycles of 36 cells.

So the next problem was to find Base Conversion routines, and I remembered that Dilwyn had printed some in QL Today, so I emailed him and he kindly gave me permission to use his program for tallying.

But soon a problem appeared : By allocating 128MB of Ram for the list and using 32-bit addressing, only four-letter words could be sorted, as the list, (as with integers), contains all the possible combinations of the digits in that base.

## QUANTA Magazine

For example, a base 36 list of four-letter words requires 1,679,615 8-bit addresses, the limit for 32-bit machines. incidentally, it transpires that sorting text containing 12-letter words would require around  $1E19$  address cells in base 26, hardly practical.

First I wrote the program for alphanumeric sorting in base 36, and had it up and running within about an hour and a half, but this limited the range to four-letter words.

Now I had a working program, so how did it compare to 'Quicksort' on timings? Instead of using Quicksort, I used my own 'Radix Sort' which runs at about the same speed, limiting the list size to 32766 four-letter words. Radix took about the same time to completion as Tally sort (in base 26). But, whereas Radix has a maximum limit of 32766 cells in its array, tally can hold 351,801,800 words in 8-bit RAM cells!

The string tally list contains all permutations of the alphabet & integers, (most words of which are not found in any dictionary). So text tallying would appear to be best for niche applications, sorting say genetic codes, or for compiling a dictionary of all human speech!

Indeed with genetic codes, where there are only the four letters AGCT, sorting would be very fast indeed using base four arithmetic...(Note that the printed routine for four-letter words has an actual list length of 1,679,615 cells to check under base 36 arithmetic, yet it is still as fast as Quicksort).

If the maximum four-letter word was say 'jump' the sorting would be much faster still. Written in machine code, the original integer tally sort was 80 times faster than in Sbasic... Any volunteers for machine coding tallying? On my 2.8+Ghz QPC, timings for four letter words : 32,766 words 24 secs \*1 327,660 words 65 secs \*2.7 3,277,600 words 173 secs \*7.232,766,000 words secs

In this magazine, I am giving you the code of my first prototype, and as it is entirely new you can consider if any of your own applications would



## QUANTA Magazine

benefit from it. As for timings, the base 26 program is as fast as Quicksort, but that is because it is only sorting 32766 words in a list of 32766 cells, averaging one tally per cell. But the program can store millions of words in the list, (up to 255 tallies per 8-bit cell, that is 351,801,800 words), so the smaller the word rank, and the more tallies there are per cell, the faster and more efficient the program is.

So tallying important text such as the complete works of Shakespeare could be many hundreds of times faster than Quicksort! This efficiency is not true for Quicksort or any other sorting program, so thank you Dilwyn for having suggested what has turned out to be a very interesting exercise.

So Tally sorting has turned out to be what could be the fastest sorting routine available on QLs or QPC. Speed testing of course is not absolute, but depends on what sort of machine or emulator you are using.

I compared Tally and Radix on my SuperGoldCard QL and my AMD 2.8+Ghz QPC. You will of course get different values depending on what sort of machine you have.

Then I tried to find out on the internet what the world's fastest sorting code was, and came up with the HADOOP SORT, which sorts 1 Terabyte of integers in 209 seconds. (That's about 100 times faster than the integer tally sort printed in the last bulletin).

I found this figure to be totally unlikely, but after more net searching I found out more information. Here are the details :Sorting done using the Yahoo Hammer Cluster : 3800 nodes : 2 quad core Xeons at 2.5Ghz per node : 4 SATA disks per node : 8Go ram per node : 1 Gbit Ethernet per node : 40 nodes per track : 8Gbit Ethernet links from each rack to core : Red Hat Linux server (kernel 2.6.18 : Sun Java JDK 32 & 64 bit.

It would be interesting to run Tally code on this setup under the same conditions, as the tally program is perfectly suitable for running on

## QUANTA Magazine

parallel machines, as the code is strictly linear and contiguous, perfect for cacheing, which is why tallying is so fast on any machine anyway.

I cannot finish here without mentioning Harold H Seward who wrote a 'Counting Sort' in 1954 when computers had so little memory that using the technique, (which is very similar to Tally Sorting), would have been quite impossible. But to be quite honest, I had no knowledge of him when I first wrote the tally code in 1984.

So next time I hope to have 16-bit addressing and later a 64-bit program running, but fear it will have too many overheads which will slow it considerably, so if you have a 64-bit computer you can adapt the code for sorting 6-letter words.

But it is most likely that the best method will be to sort six-letter words using tally sort, with larger words being shunted to radix sort, with the whole lot merge-sorted thereafter for maximum efficiency.

Time will tell. In the meantime, please feel free to tinker as you wish.

Happy Sorting, Steve

```
100 ::
110 REMark T36_bas v20apr2011, v5nov2011
120 CLCHP: CLEAR: CLS
130 :
140 REMark let n$ be 'z', 'zz', 'zzz', or 'zzzz'
150 REMark let nwords be from 2 to 351801800
160 REMark let pr=1 to get results printed to
screen.
```

## QUANTA Magazine

```
170 n$='zz': n=To_Dec(n$,36): nwords=32
180 adr=ALCHP(n): PRINT n$!n : pr=1
190 :
200 d1=DATE: IF d1=DATE: GO TO 200 : ELSE d1=DATE
210 :
220 REMark allocate the tallys:
230 FOR ct=1 TO nwords
240 REMark create database to sort
250 IF n$='z' : r$=RND(35)
260 IF n$='zz' : r$=RND(1295)
270 IF n$='zzz' : r$=RND(466)&RND(55)
280 IF n$='zzzz': r$=RND(1679)&RND(615)
290 REMark tally the database:
300 rand=r$: cell=adr+rand: tally=PEEK(cell): POKE
cell,tally+1
310 IF pr: PRINT!To_Base$(rand,36)!!
320 IF tally>254: PRINT'Tally Overflow': STOP
330 END FOR ct: PRINT'\\DATE-d1!'secs'\\
340 :
350 REMark set timer
360 d1=DATE: IF d1=DATE: GO TO 360 : ELSE d1=DATE
370 :
380 REMark search ram for tallies:
390 FOR ct=0 TO n
```

## QUANTA Magazine

```
400  REMark see if cell contains a tally:
410  cell=adr+ct: tally=PEEK(cell)
420  IF tally THEN
430    sorted$=To_Base$(ct,36)
440    IF pr: FOR twins=1 TO tally: PRINT sorted$!!
450  END IF
460 END FOR ct
470 PRINT \\DATE-d1\'secs'!: RECHP adr
480 ::
490 ::
500 REMark Base_Conversions, by D.Jones
510 REMark QLT v10,i3, p43.
520 :
530 DEFine FuNction To_Base$(dc,base)
540 LOCal x,c,c$
550 x=dc
560 c$=''
570 REPeat loop
580   c=x-(INT(x/base)*base)
590   IF c<10 THEN
600     c$=CHR$(48+c)&c$
610   ELSE
620     c$=CHR$(55+c)&c$
630   END IF
```

## QUANTA Magazine

```
640   x=INT(x/base)
650   IF x<=0: EXIT loop
660 END REPEAT loop
670 RETURN c$
680 END DEFINE
690 :
700 DEFINE FUNCTION To_Dec(bs$,base)
710 LOCAL d,l,n,v
720 d=0
730 l=LEN(bs$)
740 FOR n=1 TO l
750   v=CODE(bs$(n))
760   v=v-48
770   IF v>9: v=v-7
780   IF v>15: v=v-32
790   d=d+base^(l-n)*v
800 END FOR n
810 RETURN d
820 END DEFINE
830 ::
```

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**Notice No.2**

**T**he AGM of QUANTA will soon be upon us again.

Nominations are invited for the posts of Treasurer, Secretary and Chairman together with the ordinary members of the Committee. As normal the posts of Librarian, Newsletter Editor, Membership Secretary and Sales Manager will be drawn from the Committee. Please note that we request nominations to be with the Secretary by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012.

I would like to remind you of the clauses of the Constitution that refer to Election to the Committee, Nominations for Committee Posts, and Special Resolutions:-

5.01 Any member seeking election to the Committee shall declare any Commercial interest that he or his employer has in the activities of QUANTA or its members.

8.3 All nominations for Committee posts and any proposition to be put at an Annual General Meeting other than the Ordinary Business stated in 8.1 shall be signed by the intending proposer and seconder and sent to the Secretary and received before 1st February in each year so that it can be circulated with the notice convening the meeting.

8.4 Any proposition to change the Constitution shall be by Special Resolution. A Special Resolution requires to be sent with the notice convening a General Meeting giving twenty one day's notice and requiring a two-thirds majority of those voting.

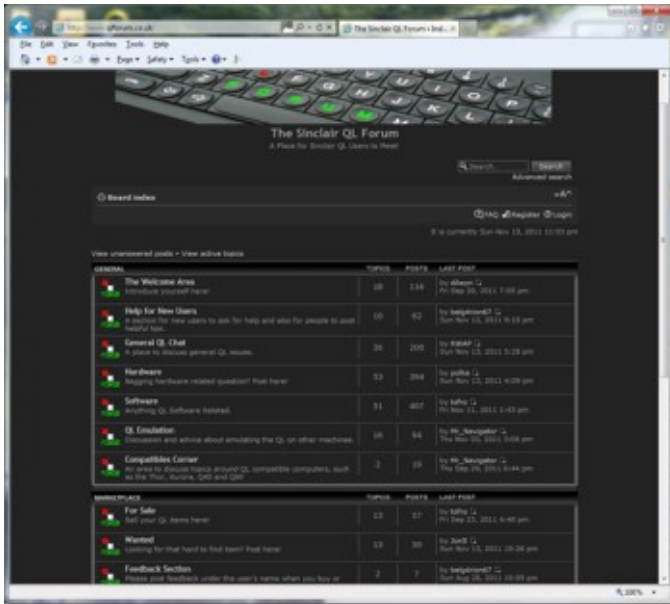
Necessary qualifications for the Committee are basically plenty of time and lots of energy.

Signed: Alison Southern

QUANTA Secretary

[secretary@quanta.org.uk](mailto:secretary@quanta.org.uk) – or postal address inside front cover of this Magazine.

About a year ago two people fairly new to the QL decided to go about setting up an online forum for the QL. QL Forum became a bigger success than most of us expected at the time. The ql-users email mailing list was the primary online scene for the QL, but as forums have become quite widespread for other computers, the time seems to have been right to set up an online forum of this type, to bring together a meeting and discussion place for QL users worldwide. To celebrate a year of QL Forum, Quanta cornered founders Peter Scott and Rob Heaton to ask them a few questions about how it all started and how they see things going.



Screen printout of QL Forum home page



## QUANTA Magazine

Q: What gave you the idea or motivation to set up the QL Forum?

Pete: "I've been a big fan of forums finding them a valuable (and often entertaining) community for a wide range of my interests (from car mechanics, Sinclair C5s, gaming or even cult films) I thought was a shame that the QL didn't have it's own forum to call home and the ideas went from there."

Q: How did you and Rob both got involved with the QL?

Pete: "I knew Rob well from the Acorn RISC OS scene and we often traded Acorn parts as well as retro computers. We both have a keen interest in computing but especially old machines and consoles. Myself a big Sinclair fan but also console gaming while Rob was more into the Acorn, Amiga and BBC.

Q: What got you both involved with the QL at a fairly late stage in its life?

Pete: "I have always been a Sinclair fan, I first started playing games on my Uncle's ZX Spectrum in the mid 80's, which later became mine. I stuck with the Spectrum for years after Your Sinclair published the last magazine, following the speccy in small fanzines and tape magazines like AlchNews.

I had a QL in my Sinclair collection for a number of years but I never really used it until last year when I fancied taking up something different as a proper hobby machine. I work with PC's everyday so it's nice to experience something different plus it's a Sinclair 😊

I found the QL unique and very intriguing, although the main thing what

## QUANTA Magazine

impressed me was how friendly and helpful the QL community is. Dilwyn Jones and Rich Mellor amongst others were very helpful with buckets of patience. Helping me get past beginners pitfalls of self extracting zip files, microdrives and hardware foibles. Soon after I joined Quanta after seeing it advertised by RWAP and my interest snowballed even further.

Rob had never heard of the machine before, but was very familiar with the 68000 based Amiga. As I spent more and more time on the machine I told Rob various tales of the machine plus the help I'd got which inspired him to get one. When the forum first started Rob didn't own a QL but handled all of the technical server side aspects. "

Q: Where did the Forum software come from and how did you decide what to use?

Rob: "I had used the forum software (phpBB) for several projects at work, I was already comfortable with the administration tools and the installation, so it was the natural choice really. phpBB is open source, so didn't cost us anything. We didn't want to invest in anything more comprehensive, especially as we didn't know if the forum was going anywhere!"

Q: Did you do any market research, or did you just decide to set it up as it is?

Pete: "We never thought about research, deciding just to build it and hope people will turn up. I knew it would be slow and steady progress initially just expecting a few posts a week with the odd person signing up but it's done far better than I expected. The support from the QL

## **QUANTA Magazine**

community has been outstanding with help, advertising and ideas from all over. Quanta, QL Today, RWAP and Dilwyn all gave us mentions to spread the word. Plus Dave Park also provided some very helpful advice on the layout of the forum.”

Q: What were you hoping to achieve with QL Forum?

Pete: “Hopefully provide a friendly welcoming forum for people to chinwag about all things QL and also attract people to take up the QL.”

“Q: How many registered users are there and do you have any idea how many just frequent it as “guests”?

Rob: “As of mid November, we have 99 members, sadly not all of them are 'active' members! (I had set a private goal of wanting 100 members for the first year, but 99 is good enough for me!). I use Google Analytics to get an overview of how users reach the forum and what they do once they arrive. We are averaging 2000 page views per month, with about 78% of those being returning visitors. Around 50% of visitors just browse the site as a guests, but I guess a lot of users only login if they have something to contribute.”

Q: What do you think the Forum has achieved in its short lifetime?

Pete: "We have seen posts from users new to the QL and also from those returning to the machine. Not to mention the fact that we have posters from various countries. We have a number of Italian users, plus posters from France, Germany, Holland and Sweden. It's added something different to the QL scene and people have responded positively. "

## **QUANTA Magazine**

Q: Can you give us a summary of the main subjects discussed and which topics proved most helpful and interesting to you, and any subjects cropped up you weren't expecting?

Pete: "All kinds of QL topics are covered and we are always open to suggestions, requests and ideas. The posting content is also wide ranging from help for beginners to technical questions on hardware and programming. The forum had a 20 line programming challenge and we have seen some excellent posts from Polka on programming in Forth which I knew very little about. From a personal point of view I love posting about QL games and I'm in the process of writing an adventure game on the QL using ACT. It's still in the design stage but the forum has been an excellent sounding board for ideas and feedback."

Q: How do you see QL Forum developing in the future and do you have any ideas on how to draw in more mainstream QL users to avoid it becoming a niche part of the QL scene frequented only by the same old hardcore QL users.

Pete: "At the moment users seem to be joining by word of mouth or finding us via search engines. The next step is hoping to attract further users with adverts in Quanta and QL Today. The long term plan is spread the word about the QL and the QL forum on other websites, clubs and magazines which cover other Sinclair products, retro computers and computing gaming. I think there is a huge appetite for using old computers and consoles which can be tapped into but people need to be made aware of the QL. For example the Spectrum scene is well supported but I think most speccy fans will be unfamiliar with the QL and what it has to offer. I don't think there is one big main idea that will

## QUANTA Magazine

attract a lot of new users in one go but a scattergun approach is needed to attract a small amount of new users from various multiple areas."

Q: Any ideas on how to further promote the QL Forum in the future?

Rob: "I am hoping to promote the Forum, Quanta & the QL in general at some of the retro computing shows. Most of the shows are games orientated, but any interest we can drum up will be a good result! I've been to quite a few shows over the last few years, and I don't think I've ever noticed a QL anywhere, this is something I plan to rectify!"



*Peter Scott in his Sinclair C5*

\* Visit the QL Forum at <http://www.qlforum.co.uk> and explore the discussions and subjects, reading them as a guest visitor. To join the

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Forum to be able to contribute to discussions, click on the Register link on the right, just below the picture of a QL on the home page. You will then need to agree to the Terms and Conditions then enter your username and email address to register as a member of the Forum. It then sends you a confirmation email. Once you have registered, you will then also be able to post messages and replies on the forum, as well as read the content. Registration and use of the QL Forum is of course totally free.



*Rob Heaton (no Sinclair C5 in sight)*

**D**uring the last few weeks the Committee have been considering various proposals from members for improvements. Progress is slow we have lost touch with the Committee members who were originally involved, they are no longer current members. This is an ongoing project.

**PLEASE READ THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE BEFORE 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2011.**

Comments should be sent either by letter to the Secretary, address at the front of the magazine, or by email to:

[committee@quanta.org.uk](mailto:committee@quanta.org.uk).

To date we have not received any negative feedback from the proposed new constitution published in the June/July magazine.

There has been response to the published changes to the membership fees and the additional postal charges, mostly positive. There are a few of our older members who will not be renewing their subscriptions through a number of reasons, not necessarily just as a result of the changes.

There has been only one offer to host the Annual General Meeting in March 2012, and that has been received from NEMQLUG. By agreement the Annual general meeting will be held in Manchester as last year. The

# RWAP Software

We have been working hard to safeguard the future of the Sinclair QL through creating an online QL Wiki backed by a repository of QL titles.

The QL Wiki enables people to see what software and hardware was produced for the Sinclair QL. The repository enables people to purchase working copies when their microdrive cartridges fail, or they move onto disks or emulators. Where we can, we obtain permission from the copyright holders to re-release items on the market.

This has enabled us to bring some of the titles back to the market as well as re-ignite interest in the Sinclair QL and its emulators.

Old favourites brought back to life include:

- E.V.A., Vroom
- Black Knight, Double Block
- Jungle Eddi, The Lost Pharaoh
- Pengi, the Lonely Joker
- Microdeal's Flight Simulator, QL Hopper, The King,
- Night Nurse and Cuthbert in Space
- Mortville Manor, Darkside of the Moon (£10)

We still retain our existing catalogue, including:

- Open Golf, Return to Eden,
- Stone Raider II, The Prawn,
- Hoverzone, Lost Kingdom of Zkul,
- Deathstrike, Horrorday,
- Flightdeck and QWord

All games are available on disk or for use with Q-emulator on the PC **from ONLY £5 each**.

Microdrive versions also available - from £10 each.  
*Memory / system limits may apply - please check before ordering.*

Visit the QL Wiki for more details on software, books and hardware for the Sinclair QL:  
[www.rwapadventures.com/ql\\_wiki](http://www.rwapadventures.com/ql_wiki)

## RWAP Software

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## Website:

[www.rwapsoftware.co.uk](http://www.rwapsoftware.co.uk) or [www.sellmyretro.com](http://www.sellmyretro.com)



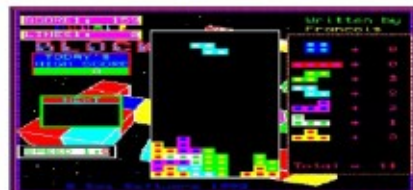
Vroom by Pyramide



E.V.A. by Westway



Mortville Manor by Pyramide



Double Block by Francois Lancault



Night Nurse by Microdeal



## **QUANTA Magazine**

dates are Saturday March 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup> 2012. I appreciate that this is earlier than usual but John and I are away from 31<sup>st</sup> March until end of June.

Nomination papers are enclosed with this magazine issue and should be returned to the Secretary before February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. All nominees and proposers must be current members of QUANTA at that date.

The Committee wish everyone a **Happy Christmas** and all the best for the **New Year** and 2012

**QUANTA HELPLINE**

**Dilwyn Jones**

### **Job2Bas Program**

With the increasing use of QL emulators prompting a need to transfer ever more files between a QL and an emulator, one solution has been to make use of the ZIP compression utility to protect the QL executable job header as a QL program gets transferred through a non-QL environment.

If you copy a QL program such as Quill into a Windows folder, for example, Windows does not know how to handle the QL executable's header, strips it off, and to all intents and purposes converts what was a program you could EXEC on the QL into a simple data file. Try to execute that in QDOS or SMSQ/E and you might well get an error

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message such as "bad parameter".

Using QL ZIP to hide away the header does work, but of course you need to know how to use QL ZIP and UNZIP as well as know how to transfer the file through another operating system so that the QL emulator receives the file intact. Plus there is another little snag - if the QL emulator has no Unzip program, you will need a copy of Unzip to Unzip the Zipped copy of Unzip - catch 22.

So I thought I'd attack this problem from another angle and try to see if I could think of a way of allowing QL executable programs to pass through another operating system without losing the file header. This method had to ensure that apart from Toolkit 2 (which most emulators either have built in or can load a simple Toolkit 2 ROM image) the process needs no other significant extra software.

So, the rather radical solution I came up with was to convert the QL program to a SuperBASIC program. Yes, that's right, a BASIC program.

SuperBASIC and SBASIC programs can pass through other operating systems as simple data files as long as you don't change the end of line character by doing something like loading the QL BASIC program into a wordprocessor or something like that, which might add carriage return characters to the end of the lines of BASIC and so prevent it from running.

What JOB2BAS does is to store the executable program as a (long) set

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of DATA statements in a BASIC program, and adds a few lines of BASIC to those DATA statements to allow the original program to be reconstituted just by running the resultant BASIC program on the target computer.

So the process is:

1. Run the JOB2BAS\_bas program
2. Tell it which executable program to encode as a BASIC program
3. The output BASIC program is written to a file
4. Transfer this new BASIC program (we might call it OUTPUT\_BAS for example) to the target operating system
5. Copy the BASIC program into the target QL emulator
6. Run it on there and tell it what filename to use to save the reconstituted executable program. It remembers the original filename, but you can choose a new filename if you wish.
7. Having saved the executable program file, you can then move any other files needed over as well and proceed to test the software on the emulator.

It is a difficult concept to visualise, but having used the process once or twice (e.g. to transfer a copy of QL UNZIP to the emulator!), you should find it's an easy enough program to use.

There are three options you can change at the start of the program:

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1. First line number of the created BASIC program
2. Line increment step from one line to the next
3. The number of items on each line of DATA values (higher values allow longer program to be encoded, but make the output program more difficult to read if you wish to study it)

Here is the Job2Bas program listing. If you would rather not type it in, it is available to download from my website at <http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/arch/index.html> , where you will also find a copy of the Unzip program already processed by this program.

```
100 REMark JOB2BAS_bas - convert an executable job to
a BASIC program
110 REMark by Dilwyn Jones, September 2011
120 :
130 REMark configuration options
140 line_no%          = 1 : REMark first line number of
the outputted S*BASIC program.
150 line_inc%        = 1 : REMark line number
increment steps of S*BASIC program
160 datas_per_line% = 4 : REMark number of DATA
values per line
170 :
180 CLS : CLS #0
190 :
200 INPUT #0, 'Enter name of program to convert to
BASIC data > ';ip$
210 IF ip$ = '' THEN STOP
220 :
```

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```
230 INPUT #0,'Filename of BASIC program to save >
';op$
240 IF op$ = '' THEN STOP
250 :
260 OPEN_IN #3,ip$
270 IF FTYP (#3) <= 0 THEN
280   REMark no need to convert data files or S*BASIC
programs
290   CLOSE #3
300   PRINT #0,'No need to convert this file type.'
310   STOP
320 END IF
330 :
340 file_len   = FLEN(#3) : REMark length of original
program
350 data_space = FDAT(#3) : REMark dataspace of
original program
360 :
370 IF file_len <= 0 OR data_space <= 0 THEN
380   CLOSE #3
390   PRINT #0,'Unsuitable program file.'
400   STOP
410 END IF
420 :
430 REMark how many long words and any extra (1-3
bytes) in Job file?
440 no_of_words   = INT(file_len/2)
450 oddbytes      = file_len-(2*no_of_words)
460 :
470 base = ALCHP(file_len) : REMark use RESPR instead
if your system has no ALCHP extension
480 IF base <= 0 THEN
```

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```
490   CLOSE #3
500   PRINT #0,'Unable to allocate memory to hold the
original job.'
510   STOP
520 END IF
530  :
540 PRINT #0,'Loading'!ip$!'...'
550 LBYTES ip$,base
560 PRINT #0,'Building output S*BASIC program...'
570  :
580 OPEN_NEW #4,op$
590  :
600 REMark comment start of the S*BASIC equivalent...
610 PRINT #4,line_no%&' REMark '&ip$&' as an S*BASIC
program.'
620 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
630  :
640 REMark comment how to recreate the Job program
file
650 PRINT #4,line_no%&' REMark just RUN this program
to recreate the original Job file'
660 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
670  :
680 REMark add code to output BASIC program to
recreate original Job
690 PRINT #4,line_no%
&' : '
           : line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
700 PRINT #4,line_no%&' CLS : CLS #0 :
RESTORE'                                     :
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
710 PRINT #4,line_no%&' READ
```

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```
words,oddbytes'  
    : line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
720 PRINT #4,line_no%&' READ  
orig_name$,orig_dspace'  
    : line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
730 PRINT #4,line_no%&' base = ALCHP((2*words)  
+oddbytes) : REM or use RESPR() '          : line_no% =  
line_no%+line_inc%  
740 PRINT #4,line_no%&' FOR a = 0 TO words-  
1'          :  
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
750 PRINT #4,line_no%&' READ value : POKE_W base+  
(2*a),value'          : line_no% =  
line_no%+line_inc%  
760 PRINT #4,line_no%&' END FOR  
a'  
    : line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
770 PRINT #4,line_no%&' IF oddbytes > 0 THEN':  
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
780 PRINT #4,line_no%&' READ value : POKE base+  
(2*words),value'          : line_no% =  
line_no%+line_inc%  
790 PRINT #4,line_no%&' END  
IF'  
    : line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%  
800 PRINT #4,line_no%&' PRINT #0,"Original filename  
was ";orig_name$'          : line_no% =  
line_no%+line_inc%  
810 PRINT #4,line_no%&' INPUT #0,"Save as filename >  
";op$'          : line_no% =  
line_no%+line_inc%  
820 PRINT #4,line_no%&' IF op$ = "" THEN
```

## QUANTA Magazine

```
STOP'
:
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
830 PRINT #4,line_no%&' PRINT #0,"Saving
";op$'
:
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
840 PRINT #4,line_no%&' SEXEC
op$,base,2*words+oddbytes,orig_dspace'
: line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
850 PRINT #4,line_no%&' RECHP base : REMark remove if
using RESPR() above' : line_no% =
line_no%+line_inc%
860 PRINT #4,line_no%&' PRINT #0,"Program
finished"'
:
line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
870 PRINT #4,line_no%&'
STOP'
: line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
880 PRINT #4,line_no%
&' :
: line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
890 :
900 REMark how many long words and any extra bytes...
910 PRINT #4,line_no%&' DATA
'&no_of_words&', '&oddbytes&' : REMark number of LONG
WORDS and ODD BYTES at end'
920 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
930 :
940 REMark what was the original filename?
950 PRINT #4,line_no%&" DATA '"&ip$&"' : REMark
original Job program's filename."
960 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
970 :
980 REMark what was the original dataspace?
```



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```
990 PRINT #4,line_no%&' DATA '&data_space&' : REMark
original dataspace'
1000 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
1010 PRINT #4,line_no%&' :' : REMark just a spacer
line
1020 line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
1030 :
1040 REMark start to assemble the program data
1050 dpl% = 0 : REMark how many DATA items on current
line so far?
1060 lne$ = line_no%&' DATA '
1070 :
1080 FOR a = base TO base+file_len-1 STEP 2
1090   word = PEEK_W(a) : REMark get a word
1100   IF dpl% >= datas_per_line% THEN
1110     PRINT #4,lne$ : REMark output the line
1120     line_no% = line_no% + line_inc%
1130     lne$ = line_no% & ' DATA '&word
1140     dpl% = 1
1150   ELSE
1160     REMark still room on this line
1170     REMark add a comma before value (unless this
is the first item after DATA)
1180     IF dpl% > 0 THEN lne$ = lne$&','
1190     lne$ = lne$ & word : REMark add to DATA list
1200     dpl% = dpl% + 1
1210   END IF
1220 NEXT a
1230   IF dpl% > 0 THEN PRINT #4,lne$ : REMark part
line to output
1240 END FOR a
1250 :
1260 IF oddbytes THEN
```

# QL Today Subscription

We at QL Today are moving into our 16th year! The upcoming issue 1 of Volume 16 will come with a DVD (included in the price) containing all previous issues of QL Today in PDF format - from Volume 1 to Volume 16, English and German (as long as German ones were produced). Don't miss it - by subscribing for Volume 16, you get 15 complete Volumes from the past to read as well!

You can subscribe by using this form (or a copy of it), or subscribe online via [www.QLToday.com](http://www.QLToday.com) (the form can be downloaded) by email, letter, fax etc. ... we are flexible!

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by Urs König

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```
1270  REMark any odd bytes (1 to 3) to add?
1280  line_no% = line_no%+line_inc%
1290  lne$ = line_no%&' DATA '
1300  FOR a = 1 TO oddbytes
1310      IF a > 1 THEN lne$ = lne$&', '
1320      lne$=lne$&PEEK(base+file_len-oddbytes)
1330  END FOR a
1340  PRINT #4,lne$
1350 END IF
1360 :
1370 REMark finished, so tidy up
1380 CLOSE #3 : REMark input JOB file
1390 CLOSE #4 : REMark output BASIC file
1400 RECHP base : REMark REM out this line if no RECHP
command on your system
1410 :
1420 REMark tell user we have finished
1430 PRINT #0,'Program finished.'
1440 PRINT 'Transfer!'
op$!'to'!'the'!'required'!'system,'!'then'!'just'!'RUN
'!'it'!'to'!'recreate'!'the'!'Job'!'program'!'file!'
1450 STOP
```

## **VROOM REVIEW**

**Peter Scott**

**W**ith the end of the Formula 1 season in sight, Vroom emerges from the pits as a recent re-release from Team RWAP. Originally released in 1986 by Pyramide, Vroom is very much a classic 80's arcade racing game in the mould of Atari's Pole Position.

The racing takes place in-car with your dashboard showing your current speed as digital numbers in KPH. The car itself glides from side to side to

## QUANTA Magazine

navigate corners or overtake other cars on the track. You also have a circuit map at the top of the screen to help you slow down and plan for corners plus.



The handling can be tricky with the car being slow to sweep from one side of the track to the other. To counter this you have to be fairly aggressive with your steering as you pick your way through the traffic avoiding any contact which slows you to a halt instantly.

The graphics are colourful and crisp with a lovely scrolling backdrop on the horizon while QL sponsored billboards whip past you on the sides of the track. The sound is very basic but functional with an engine noise plus a skidding sound to help you slow down for corners.

The QL is short on racing games making Vroom worth a look if you fancy a quick burst of racing action.

### **WANTED**

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*Fellow QLers!*

*I'm trying to track down a copy of 'QL Pawn'*

*If you have a copy you want to sell, working or not, please get in touch!*

*Email: [rob@robheaton.co.uk](mailto:rob@robheaton.co.uk)*

*QL Forum PM: robheaton*

## **SUBGROUP MEETINGS**

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**S**ub group meetings are where QUANTA members and non-QUANTA members get together to discuss, tinker and explore all things QL related. If there is a subgroup near you then why not pop along and see what's happening, you never know there may be something you could help with or a problem that you know the answer to.

If there is not a sub-group near you why not hold one yourself? (Ed.)

---

### **THE WEST MIDLANDS QL USER GROUP**

**T**here has been a change of venue, brought about by the owners of the Queens Head pub changing it from a straight pub into an eatery. The new meeting place is called the Bull, the address is 1 Price Street, Birmingham, B4 6JU. Approx 7 minutes walk from Snow Hill main-line railway station and has ample street parking nearby. Meetings remain open to QUANTA members and non-members alike.

After your first meeting you're expected to pay £1 each time towards the organisation and monthly newsletter costs - except once a year when the group pays all those who attend a pound instead ;-)

We provide food twice a year for those who attend the AGM and the group's birthday party) and at meetings we discuss all sorts of things, QL-related and otherwise, usually from about 8:20pm onwards till 10:30 or later. The group owns QL hardware, a disk library and subscribes to relevant magazines. People can join the mailing list for £3.50 per year, even if they can't attend regularly.

Meetings: Meetings are usually on the first and third Monday of each month (but not on bank holidays unless the previous one was cancelled for that reason).

Contact: The contact number remains Mike Bedford White's, on 0121 605 4438, anytime after 11am.

[Email: mikebwhite@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mikebwhite@blueyonder.co.uk)

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### QUANTA DORSET SUBGROUP – Dorset

**M**eetings are held, on the second Sunday of each month between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. For location please contact: John Penn-Simkins - 01202 422491 or John Mason - 01425 275894

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### LONDON QL AND QUANTA GROUP

**M**eetings are held in the School Room, which is the basement of the Borough Welsh Congregational Chapel, 90, Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1. This is almost opposite the junction with Marshalsea Road, at the other end of which, 5 minutes walk away, is the Borough Underground Station. Free parking is easily available in Southwark Bridge Road for road users, Cyclists are welcome.

Members currently each pay a subscription of £40 per year towards the cost of the hire of the hall and a small additional charge is made for tea/coffee - biscuits are then provided free.

Please bring your QL equipment if possible, all types welcome, e.g., PC portable running emulators. The Group has some systems stored at the venue for its use. In addition, there are lots of donated second user equipment, books, magazines, etc., available for purchase. Time: 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm., on the second Sunday of the month. No meetings are held in December / January - winter break, or July / August –the summer break, giving 8 meetings a year. Malcolm Cadman - 020 8691 5780

[Email: QL@mcad.demon.co.uk](mailto:QL@mcad.demon.co.uk)

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### NEMQLUG - THE NORTH EAST MANCHESTER QL USER GROUP

**M**eetings are held at 181, Urmston Lane, Stretford, Manchester. M32 9EH (Near Junction 7 of M60 Motorway •Was Junction 7 M63 Motorway). Our informal meetings start at 7 p.m. and finish at 11 pm. All welcome. Meetings are on the last Thursday of each month (except December). John/Sarah Gilpin – 0161 865 2872 ([thegilpins@btopenworld.com](mailto:thegilpins@btopenworld.com))

## QUANTA Magazine

### SCOTTISH QL USERS GROUP

**S** QLUG meets at George Gwilt's home every second Sunday in the month. Please contact George Gwilt before coming, to get the location. [Gdgqler@gmail.com](mailto:Gdgqler@gmail.com)

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### SOLENT SUBGROUP

**M** eetings are at Botley Market Hall, all welcome. Park at the back and use side entrance on the 1st Saturday of the month from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Graham Evans - 023 8040 3350.

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### SURREY QUANTA SUBGROUP (SQSG)

**T** he group is currently trying other venues in the Leatherhead - Epsom area. If you plan to attend but do not get our emails, please phone or email Ken Bain for the latest location. Meetings are 8.00 to 10.00 pm on the last Wednesday of each month except December. Ken Bain - 01932 347432 (to midnight), [kenb@bcs.org.uk](mailto:kenb@bcs.org.uk)

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### SUSSEX QL USER GROUP

**C** urrently without a meeting place, anyone interested should contact Roy Wood - 01273 430501 or Keith Mitchell - 01903 742263.

---

**A**nother year has rolled around again and it is time to get your nomination and voting papers out again. Thanks once again to Lee who has injected new life into the Committee, now would anyone else care to join us?

Nomination papers need to be in as soon as possible, and certainly before the end of January, please as the AGM is taking place slightly earlier than usual. This will be a very important AGM with all the business of the Constitution to deal with so we would like as large a turn out as possible to express the views of the membership. If you can't make it please return your proxy form to me so we can take your views into consideration.

The committee has been discussing various concerns that have been raised, including a few issues with the wording of letters communicating the increase in subscription rates, we hope this has now been resolved and apologise to anyone who has been confused by the letters.

We have been offered a reduced rate for QL Keyboard membranes for members, please note the advertisement in the next issue of the QUANTA magazine that will reflect this, it will be a good opportunity to buy a spare as they don't last forever, as I know to my cost.

Lastly, I would like to thank you all for your support over the last year and wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year.





I would like to apologise to all the QUANTA members for any confusion that there may have been from the renewal letters, first one of the account numbers had an erroneous 7 in it. The correct account number was 21278614.

Secondly for all non paying members we asked for a contribution towards postage (as the postal fees are continuing to go up) this was NOT mandatory and non paying members do not have to pay it to continue with their free membership, however, since the letters went out the committee have discussed this and we will NOT be asking for this money in future.

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

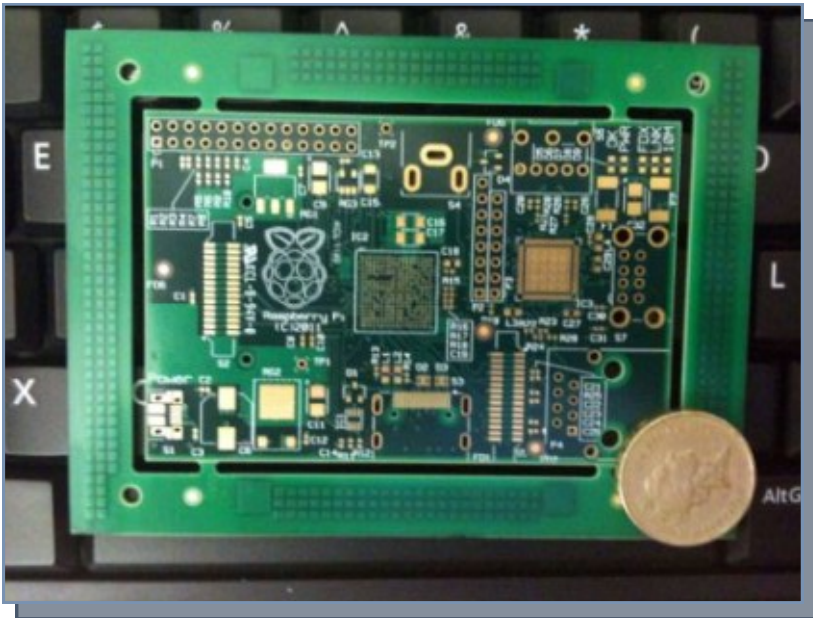
## Lee Privett

---

Besides all the usual features you expect from QUANTA, the Helpline, QUANTA News, we have a new look to the magazine (see below), info on the Atari Joystick connection and much more from all at team QUANTA.



**A**pologies, There was to be an article about the Raspberry Pi in this issue however the expected release date has been delayed a few weeks and should definitely be in the next issue. In the meantime here is an image of what the circuit board looks like based on the initial first production run of around 100 items.



*Image courtesy of the Raspberry Pi foundation*

### QBBS ENDS



A chapter in the history of the QL came to an end at the end of November. On the 29th November, Tony Firshman reported that the main disk on his QBBS QL Bulletin Board System had died, and so he had considered taking the difficult decision to shut it down. It was the last of the QL dial-up bulletin board systems and had remained in use this long largely because of its fax receiving capabilities.

QL bulletin board systems had run for years using QL software such as Jan Bredenbeek's QBOX and a later system called PBOX by Phil Borman.

*Tony Firshman wrote:*

"It has been running pretty continuously on only two sets of computer hardware since the late 80s. It originally used a black QL with GC and Astracom modem. It is now in a boxed QL with Aurora, SGC, superHermes, Mplane and a 56k USR faxmodem.

I used to link to Fidonet, and shared data with four or five QL BBSs (two or three in the UK, one in Holland and one in the USA) and the rest of the Fidonet community. Fidonet is long dead - killed by email and the internet."

It all ended on the 2nd of December, when Tony Firshman reported: "I have bought a multifunction printer, and when that arrives on Monday, QBBS will shut down, after about 24 continuous mainly reliable years."

The end of an era for those of us who used the QL bulletin board

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The screenshot shows the Quo Vadis Design website. At the top left is the logo 'QUO VADIS DESIGN' and the text 'Independent Information Technology Services'. To the right is the text 'QL/QDOS/SMSQ/E Software'. Below this is a red navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Products', 'Support', 'Company', and 'Contact'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column has a 'Welcome' section with a message about software for the Slocat Quantum 1 meg computer (QM) and a photo of the computer. The middle column has a 'News' section with two items: 'QVD QL News Blog - keep up to date' with a link to 'News Blog' and 'Quo Vadis Design Website Launched'. The right column has a 'FEATURED PRODUCT' section with a 'QPC II' product image and a 'BUY NOW!' button. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice and a footer with links for 'Home', 'Products', 'Support', 'Company', and 'Contact/History'.

QL/QDOS/SMSQ/E Software

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